Madison Police Department Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Departmental Awards and Recognition

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Purpose

The Madison Police Department (MPD) hosts a ceremony on an annual basis where MPD personnel and members of the public are recognized for actions and efforts that are deemed exemplary.

The purpose of this procedure is to clarify the definitions and criteria under which an employee or community member may receive such recognition and the underlying process to recommend and select those individuals.

In no way does the lack of formal recognition through this process intend to dismiss the hard work, sacrifice, and dedication that our employees and our public routinely display. Rather, this process also honors their efforts in our collective service to the City of Madison and our constituents.

Definitions/Criteria

Departmental Awards

The number of awards given are not restricted to a certain number (i.e., only one Lifesaving Award, etc.). However, the Awards Committee will make the determination as to how many people will receive a particular award.

- Medal of Valor Award: The Medal of Valor is the highest recognition of achievement presented by the Madison Police Department. The Medal of Valor shall be awarded to department personnel who distinguish themselves with extraordinary individual acts of bravery or heroism above and beyond that which is normally expected in the line of duty and potentially at extreme, life-threatening, personal risk. Personnel must have displayed extreme courage by placing their own safety in immediate peril in the pursuit of their duties. The actions must be so undoubtedly outstanding that they clearly distinguish above the call of duty actions from lesser forms of bravery. If a department member uses poor judgment or procedures that created the necessity for their action, they will not be eligible for this award. Recipients of the Medal of Valor Award will receive a medal/uniform pin, and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Meritorious Conduct Award: The Meritorious Conduct Award shall be awarded to department personnel who distinguish themselves by meritorious achievement or meritorious service. Meritorious actions are those actions that clearly surpass that which is normally required or expected. The degree of merit need not be unique, but must be exceptional and superior. Acts of courage which do not meet the voluntary risk of life requirements for the Medal of Valor Award may be considered for the Meritorious Conduct Award. Recipients of the Meritorious Conduct Award will receive a medal/uniform pin, and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Meritorious Lifesaving Award: The Meritorious Lifesaving Award shall be awarded to department personnel or community member(s) for saving a human life under circumstances during which the recipient exposed themselves to either personal risk and/or significant or prolonged hardship. Recipients of the Meritorious Lifesaving Award will receive a medal/uniform pin, and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police. Community member recipients of a Meritorious Lifesaving Award will receive a challenge coin and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.

- Lifesaving Award: The Lifesaving award shall be awarded to recognize the actions of department personnel or community members that directly resulted in the saving or preservation of human life that otherwise WOULD have been lost without the intervention of the department member/community member. These actions can include, but are not limited to, applications of lifesaving medical equipment (tourniquets, chest seals, etc.), direct lifesaving techniques (CCR, Heimlich, etc.), or direct intervention or removal of a subject from an imminently life-threatening situation that did not expose the recipient of the award to personal risk or prolonged hardship. NOTE: Routine response to a drug overdose will not be considered for a lifesaving citation or award. Consider an employee recognition for routine response to a drug overdose. If extenuating circumstances were present during an overdose response, see exemplary performance citation. Recipients of the Lifesaving Award will receive a certificate signed by the Chief of Police, and a uniform pin. Community member recipients of a Lifesaving Award will receive a challenge coin and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Blue Heart ~~Star~~ Award: The Blue Heart ~~Star~~ shall be awarded to department personnel who receive an injury of a degree necessitating hospitalization or the immediate care of a physician. This injury must be of a serious nature, capable of causing death or extended disability. To qualify for this award, the injury must be attributable to the deliberate actions of another directed toward the recipient or another person, or during the commission of a crime or attempted apprehension of the perpetrator, or in an attempt to save a human life placing oneself in immediate peril. Recipients of the Blue Heart ~~Star~~ Award will receive a medal/uniform pin and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Community Member Recognition Award: The Community Member Recognition Award is awarded for acts of service to the department and community under circumstances involving bravery, personal risk, or significant hardship on the part of a community member. Recipients of the Community Member Recognition Award will receive a challenge coin and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Outstanding Service Award: Outstanding service represents performance by a department employee, that demonstrates quality and/or quantity of work clearly and significantly exceeding the requirements of a position. This would also include work-related act(s) by an employee that results in exceptional performance on a special project, or occurrences in which the employee has demonstrated exceptional knowledge, skills, or ability within the scope of assigned duties and responsibilities. An employee who has demonstrated sustained community service, either on or off duty, is eligible for this award, including an employee who has shown exceptional creativity, initiative, and/or determination in finding solutions to a problem utilizing a problem solving approach. Problem-Solving efforts that will be recognized through this award will have had a significant impact on either the community and/or the department. Recipients of the Outstanding Service Award will receive a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Outstanding Support Award: This award is intended for an individual who is not employed by the Madison Police Department, but who, in their profession, has supported the Madison Police Department in an extraordinary effort. This would include, but not be limited to, other police agencies, Probation and Parole, Human Services, or other agencies that through a collaborative effort work with the police department. Individuals who volunteer their time to the Madison Police Department are eligible for this award. Recipients of the Outstanding Support Award will receive a challenge coin and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.

Chief's Citations

There are circumstances when an employee or community member engages in behavior or activity that does not meet the criteria for a departmental award but exceeds the level and scope of conduct normally acknowledged through a supervisory commendation or performance recognition. Those occurrences should be submitted to the Chief and Awards Committee for consideration for a Chief's Citation. The following four categories are the most common application of the Chief's Citation, although other circumstances may be considered at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

- Lifesaving Citation: The Lifesaving Citation shall be awarded to departmental personnel to recognize exemplary actions taken that contributed to the preservation of human life that COULD have been lost without the involvement of the department member. These actions can include but are not limited to exemplary response to individuals exhibiting suicidal behaviors, exemplary performance in locating missing individuals when there are clear dangers to the missing person (e.g. dangerous weather), and other situations where the officers' actions were exemplary and contributed to the preservation of human life. NOTE: Routine response to a drug overdose will not be considered for a lifesaving citation or award. Consider an employee recognition for routine response to a drug overdose. If extenuating circumstances were present during an overdose response, see exemplary performance citation. Lifesaving efforts which do not involve personal risk, prolonged direct exposure, or significant hardship still have a dramatic impact on those constituents who are recipients of that assistance and should be recognized. Recipients of the Chief's Citation for Lifesaving will receive a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Community Member Assistance Citation: Community Member action which does not meet the criteria for a Community Member Recognition Award but still involves a significant level of assistance by a community member that benefits the community and the department, should be considered for a Chief's Citation for Community Member Assistance. Recipients of the Chief's Citation for Community Member Assistance will receive a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Problem-Solving Citation: Awarded to a Madison Police Department employee who has shown creativity, initiative, and/or determination to find solutions to a problem utilizing a problem-solving approach to identify and effectively deal with a problem(s) that if not addressed, would continue to negatively impact the department and/or community. Recipients of the Chief's Citation for Problem-Solving will receive a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.
- Exemplary Performance Citation: Awarded to a Madison Police Department employee who has demonstrated exemplary performance in their service to the department and/or the community through work on a specific project(s) or performance during a specific incident(s). This citation should be considered when the employee's contributions do not meet the criteria for an Outstanding Service Award or Meritorious Conduct Medal. Recipients of the Chief's Citation for Exemplary Performance will receive a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.

Commendations/Recognitions

There are occasions when community members, co-workers, supervisors, and commanders recognize the work and performance of commissioned and civilian employees.

When this occurs, an Employee Recognition form should be completed. If the personnel listed should be considered for an award, the "Consider for Department Award" area of the employee recognition form should be completed. Completing this portion of the form will route the recognition form to the awards committee through the Police Executive Office Supervisor.

Should a Community Member Commendation meet the criteria for either a Departmental Award or Chief's Citation, a Departmental Award/Chief's Citation Nomination Form must be completed and the related process followed as prescribed below.

A copy of the letter with explanation of the award/recognition will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Eligibility

Any commissioned or non-commissioned member of the MPD is eligible for a Departmental Award or Chief's Citation, except the Community Member Recognition Award and the Outstanding Support Award. A recipient can only obtain one

award for each recognized event, except for the Blue Heart ~~Star~~ Award. The recipient should be given the highest award for which they are eligible.

Community members are eligible for the Community Member Recognition, Meritorious Lifesaving, Lifesaving, and Outstanding Support Awards. Community members may also be eligible for a Chief's Citation for Lifesaving and Community Member Assistance.

Any MPD employee is eligible for an Employee Commendation/Recognition. Community members may be issued a Commendation letter in those circumstances where a Chief's Citation is not appropriate. MPD employees, who retire before the awards ceremony, can still be nominated for an award/citation. These nominations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Chief of Police who will make a final determination, including if it will be included in the awards ceremony or presented prior to it.

The incident that is being nominated for an award/citation must have taken place in the calendar year prior to the awards ceremony (example: an incident that occurred January 1-December 31, 2026, is only eligible for nomination in the 2027 process).

Nomination Process

A nomination can come from any source. However, if a supervisor/commander becomes aware of an event or performance that would make an individual eligible for a Departmental Award or a Chief's Citation, that supervisor/commander shall complete a nomination form or direct a person with the most direct knowledge of the event to submit a nomination form with assistance from the supervisor/commander.

Nomination Committee

Each year, the Police Executive Office Supervisor will be responsible for selecting members of the Nomination Committee. The committee will be comprised of at least 12 members as designated below. Additional members can be added to ensure the integrity of the selection process. The purpose of the committee is to review all nomination forms collected by the Chief's Office. The Police Executive Office Supervisor will select all the members of the Nomination Committee, except for the Madison Professional Police Officers Association (MPPOA) Representative, who will be designated by the MPPOA President.

Committee members will serve between three and five years, except for the Police Executive Office Supervisor. The Police Executive Office Supervisor will ensure "continuity of experience" when establishing the committee.

The committee will meet once a year (or as needed) to make recommendations as to which individuals qualify for the above-mentioned awards. The Police Executive Office Supervisor will provide the committee's recommendations to the Assistant Chief of Support and Community Outreach for review. The Assistant Chief of Support and Community Outreach will take any necessary declined awards/citations to the Chief of Police for their final review.

The Police Executive Office Supervisor will contact the nominator of the individual(s) who were not selected for a Departmental Award after they have been provided the approved recommendations from the Chief. The nominator will be notified their nomination was not approved. After notification, the decision can be appealed within a 10-day period. That appeal consists of an email to the Chief of Police and to the Police Executive Office Supervisor to the Chief of Police. *The Chief of Police will have final decision on the appeal.*

The awards presentation will coincide around National Law Enforcement Week in May of each year. The Awards Committee will consist of:

1. Officer Advisory Committee Representative
2. MPPOA Board Representative
3. Public Information Officer

4. Police Executive Office Supervisor
5. Community Representative (non-MPD employee)
6. Local 6000 member of MPD
7. Civilian Advisory Committee Representative
8. Sergeant
9. Detective
10. Investigator
11. Lieutenant
12. Civilian member of MPD
13. Civilian Supervisor
14. Alternate Member **(optional)**

The Police Executive Office Supervisor will make every effort to ensure that the Awards Committee has a diverse membership, consistent with other MPD processes.

Wearing of Pins

An officer has the option to wear the approved uniform pin for the Medal of Valor, Meritorious Lifesaving Award, Lifesaving Award, Meritorious Conduct Medal, and the Blue Heart ~~Star~~ Award.

Nomination Form

A specific form (Departmental Award/Chief's Citation Nomination Form) has been developed to be utilized by all personnel for the purpose of recommending an employee or community member for either a Departmental Award or a Chief's Citation. An Employee Recognition form could alternatively be completed for MPD employees and the checkbox on the employee recognition form to be considered for an award shall be checked. This will route the recognition form to the awards committee through the Chief's Office. Both forms can be located on SharePoint.

Departmental Awards and Recognition SOP (end of document)